

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figs. 4, 5A, 5B and 6-10. These sheets, which includes Figs. 4, 5A, 5B and 6-10, replace the original sheet.

Each of Figs. 4, 5A, 5B and 6-10 is designated by a legend --Prior Art-- as suggested by the Examiner.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks.

Objection

In paragraph one (1) of the Office Action, it is indicated that Figs. 4, 5A, 5B, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 should be designated as -- Prior Art --.

In response, each of Figs. 4, 5A, 5B, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 is labeled as -- Prior Art --. The amended formal drawings are attached herewith at the end of this response.

In paragraph two (2) of the Office Action, it is indicated that portions of the specification include informalities.

In response, relevant portions of the specification have been amended as indicated above.

In paragraph three (3) of the Office Action, it is indicated that the title is not descriptive.

In response, a new title has been presented as indicated above.

In paragraph four (4) of the Office Action, it is indicated that claims 28 and 35-38 are objected to because of informalities.

In response, claims 28 and 35-38 are amended as shown above.

Applicant respectfully requests that these objections be withdrawn.

Status of the Claims

Applicant notes that Applicant requested to cancel claims 39-59 among the claims 1-59 originally filed when this divisional application was filed on August 14, 2003. However, the pending claims are incorrectly indicated as claims 1-59 in the Office Action. Applicant contacted the Examiner and the Examiner confirmed that the correct pending claims should be

claims 1-38. Accordingly, claims 1-38 are pending in this application. Among the pending claims, claims 1, 4, 10, 18-20, 24, 28 and 33-38 are independent.

Claims 20-38 are allowed. Claims 1-19 stand rejected. By this amendment, claims 1, 4, 10, 18 and 19 are amended. Claims 28 and 35-38 are also amended. No new matter has been entered by these amendments.

Double Patenting

In paragraph six (6) of the Office Action, claims 39-59 have been rejected under 35§101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-21 of prior U.S. Patent No. 6,650,367.

As noted above, claims 39-59 are not pending in this application rendering the rejection directed to these claims moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 20-38 have been allowed. Referring to claim 20, the Office Action indicates that the prior art fails to teach or reasonably suggest that the lens device includes an information input means for receiving second zoom operating information and zooming inhibition information from the external device. The Office Action indicates that claims 24, 28 and 33-38, are also allowed for the similar reasons as for claim 20 as discussed herein. See, e.g., pages 11-12 of the Office Action.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

In paragraph eight (8) of the Office Action, claims 1-16, 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Publ. No. 09-243899 A to Kaneda (“Kaneda”).

In paragraph twenty-eight (28) of the Office Action, claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kaneda in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,485,208 to Mabuchi et al. (“Mabuchi”).

In the Abstract section translated into English, Kaneda discloses, *inter alia*, that:

The photographing lens 418 is attachably/detachably attached to a camera main body 419. By moving the magnification changing power parts 112 and 114 on an optical axis by the turning operation of a manual zoom ring (ring member) 506, zooming (magnification changing power) is performed. A ring member detecting means 505 detects information on the rotation of the ring member 506. In the case the operation of the ring member 506 is operated to turn from a telephoto end to a wide end (turning toward a short focal distance side), for example, a lens microcomputer 410 communicates and designates a camera microcomputer 409 so that magnification may be small by electronic zooming corresponding to the operation by an operator. When the electronic zooming is turned off, the 2nd group (magnification changing power group) 112 is moved in a wide direction so as to perform optical zooming. (emphasis added)

Independent claims 1, 4, 10, 18 and 19 have been amended for further clarification. In particular, amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, that “information input means for receiving control information, which is used for controlling said variator lens means, sent from the external image device, the received control information being generated at the external image device based on the zooming position information sent from said information output means and also based on zoom operation information produced by a zooming operation at the external image device.” Other claims (i.e., claims 4, 10, 18 and 19) are amended to recite similar features to claim 1 as amended. Support for the amendment may be found, e.g., page 37, line 15 through page 38, line 16 of the original specification.

One of the aspects of the present invention as featured in the amended claims is controlling the variator lens means with control information provided from the external image device. In particular, the control information from the external image device is generated not

only based on the zooming position information sent from the variator lens means but also based on the zoom operation information produced by a zooming operation at the external image device.

With the features of the present invention as discussed above, a switching between an optical zooming and an electronic zooming is performed smoothly in an imaging system having a zoom lens system detachably attached to the imaging system where zooming operation means is provided at both the imaging system side and the lens system side. See, also, page 13, lines 5-12 of the original specification.

As Applicant understands it, Kaneda fails to show or suggest this aspect of invention as discussed above. The fact that the lens microcomputer 410 communicates and designates the camera microcomputer 409 in Kaneda does not necessarily mean that Kaneda's imaging system has the same features to the present invention as discussed above which specifically requires that the control information from the external image device is generated not only based on the zooming position information sent from the variator lens means but also based on the zoom operation information produced by a zooming operation at the external image device.

Mabuchi is cited as disclosing a communication between a lens assembly and a camera assembly. However, Mabuchi also fails to show or suggest the inventive aspect of the present invention as discussed above.

Accordingly, each of claims 1, 4, 10, 18 and 19 as amended is believed neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of the cited references (i.e., Kaneda and Mabuchi), either taken alone or in combination, for at least the reasons discussed above.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 4, 10, 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) is respectfully requested.

Applicant has not individually addressed the rejections of the dependent claims (i.e., claims 2, 3, 5-9 and 11-16) because Applicant submits that the independent claims from which they respectively depend are in condition for allowance as set forth above. Applicant however reserves the right to address such rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary.

Applicant believes that the application as amended is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

AUTHORIZATION

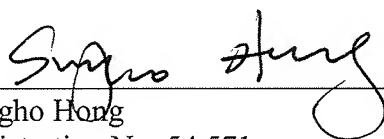
No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicant hereby petitions the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4490US1). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: June 14, 2007

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